



## **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

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(406) 444-9947

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

#### **PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

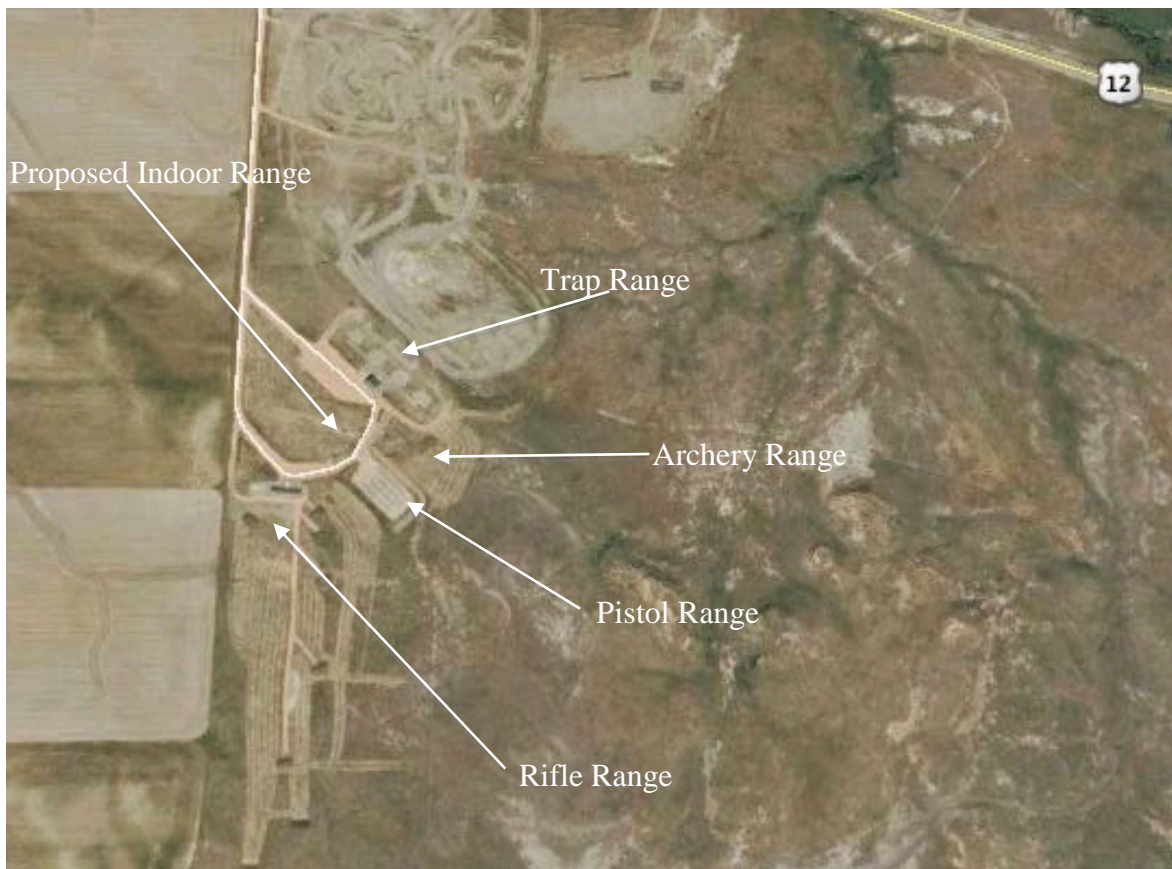
**1. Project Title:** Fallon County Shooting Range

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

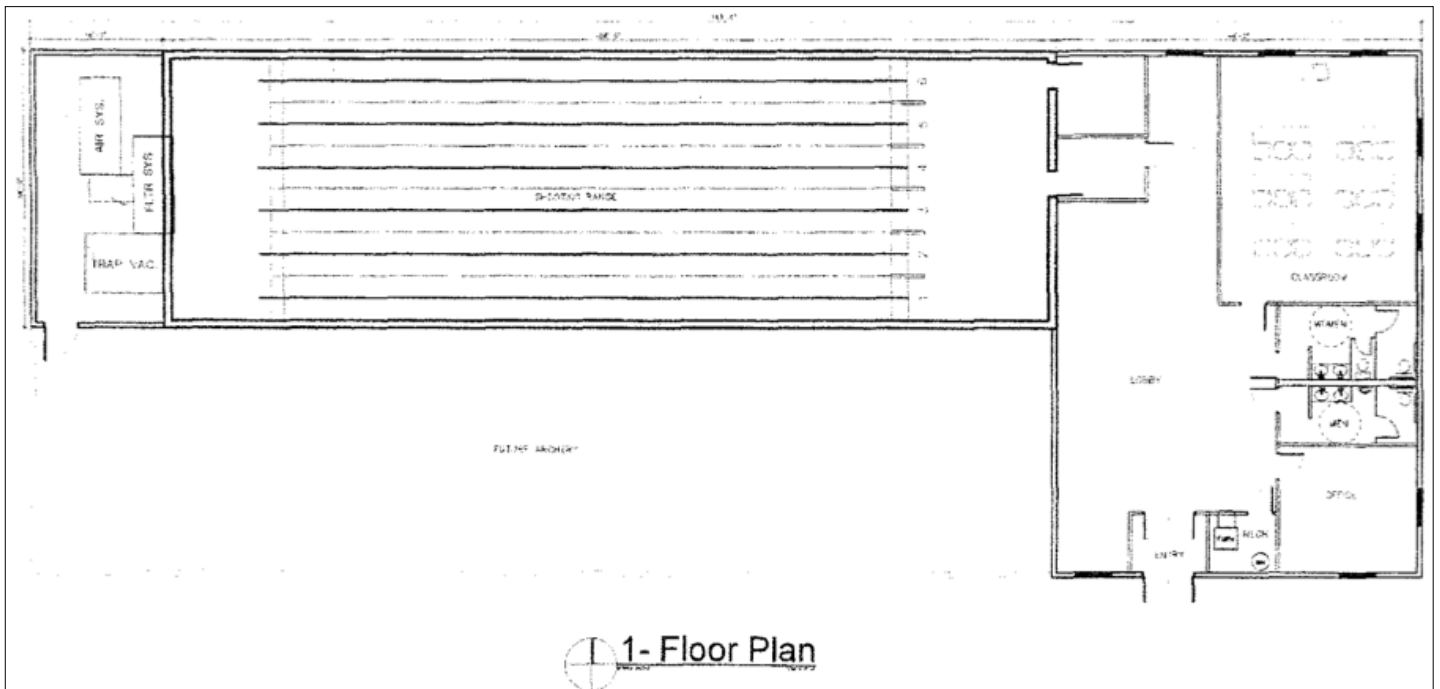
Construction of a new indoor gun range facility including: indoor classroom space for hunter education and 4-H Shooting Sports classes; year round archery and live fire shooting; facilities for law enforcement practice, training, and certification; and facilities for year round handicapped shooting. The new facility would be fully ADA compliant.

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The Fallon County Shooting Range is located on 38 acres 3 miles west of Baker, Montana at 8006 Highway 12, Baker, Montana 59313, Section 15, T7N, R59E.



**Figure 1. Fallon County Shooting Range, Baker, Montana.**



**Figure 2. Proposed Plans for Fallon County Indoor Gun Range**

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) *Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) *May not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) *may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) *shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) *Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

**5. Need for the Action(s):**

As Fallon County continues to grow, so does the need for space to hold various education projects for children and the community and for year round shooting facilities for training, practice, recreation, and competitions. 4-H Shooting Sports and Hunter's Education programs increased significantly last year and this trend is likely to continue into the future. Constructing an indoor gun range with classroom space and facilities for practical application would alleviate the need for shooting programs to be held at varying locations throughout the community wherever space can be found. The proposed project would enhance existing shooting activities in the community by providing a safe, year round facility. It would provide facilities to add new shooting activities such as year round tournaments. The proposed project would also provide additional shooting opportunities for handicapped shooters and visitors.

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

The proposed indoor gun range and facility would give the shooting community, instructors, children, handicapped shooters, and law enforcement a safe, comfortable, and convenient year round facility for education, practical application, practice, training, recreational shooting, tournaments, and other competitions.

**7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The proposed project will cover less than one acre of the 38-acre range.

**8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The 38-acre Fallon County Shooting Range is located on land owned in fee title by Fallon County. The land is not within or adjacent to any floodplain. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. Waterways on the property comprise only intermittent seasonal runoff.

**9. Description of Project:**

▪ Total for Gun Range Building	\$ 699,800
▪ Gun Range Systems Equipment, Installation, and Hangers	\$ 195,000
▪ Ventilation System, Supports, and Electrical Requirements	\$ <u>170,000</u>
▪ Total Budget for the Proposed Project	\$1,064,800
▪ Total FWP Funding Requested	\$ 25,150
▪ <b>Funding FWP Approved</b>	<b>\$ 25,150</b>

**10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

None

**Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$25,150

**11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

The Fallon County Shooting Range is located on 38 acres of public land deeded to Fallon County. Fallon County Shooting Range is a county owned facility, managed by a Board of Directors. A \$2.00 gate fee with a rented key and the gate fee are included in the annual \$25.00 key fee. Fallon County Shooting Range hosts

several free days throughout the year. Organizations that have used the range in the past include: Green Horn Target Shooters, Trap, ladies trap, Women on Target, 4-H Shooting Sports Trap, and Turkey Shoot. Green Horn Target Shooters also host several NRA High Power Shoots. Both NRA and Green Horn Target Shooters hold classes for .22 education. Hunter's Safety holds their classes at the range weather permitting during the winter.

**12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:**

Because the Fallon County Shooting Range is a public range owned by Fallon County, there has been public involvement in the planning process. Range improvement proposals have been discussed with the public, Board members, and the associated project vendors and contractors.

**13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Mike Kirschten, P.O. Box 1131, Baker, MT 59313. (406) 778-3270.

**15. Other Pertinent Information:**

The Fallon County Shooting Range is a county owned facility, managed by a Board of Directors. The range is located three miles west of Baker, Montana and serves Baker as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The closest range that provides an indoor live fire range is a private range located approximately 90 from the Fallon County Shooting Range in Glendive, MT. The range offers opportunities for several shooting sports, including long range rifle, pistol, small bore, black powder, shotgun, and archery.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 20, 2014.

**PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative,** were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct an indoor gun range. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other

alternative that was deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

**List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):**

None

**PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				<b>X</b>		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				<b>X</b>		<b>#2</b>
3. Introduction of new species into an area				<b>X</b>		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				<b>X</b>		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Existing water right or reservation				<b>X</b>		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				<b>X</b>		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				<b>X</b>		<b>#8</b>
9. Historical & archaeological sites				<b>X</b>		<b>#9</b>
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				<b>X</b>		
11. Aesthetics				<b>X</b>		

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

**8.** Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during construction of the building. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed construction of the indoor shooting facility would improve the safety for members and the public using the facility.

7. The proposed improvements to the Fallon County Shooting Range will improve the quality of the shooting sports within the community.

## **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The Fallon County Shooting Range Board's Proposed Alternative, to provide a safe, regulated shooting opportunity, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

## **PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** No

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

### **Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

## **PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

### **Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

- Mike Kirschten, P.O. Box 1131, Baker, MT 59313. (406) 778-3270.
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

### **EA prepared by:**

Andrea Darling  
Darling Natural Resource Consulting  
Montana City, MT 59634

### **Date Completed:**

August 22, 2014

### **Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Fallon County Times, Baker, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and

comment period.